

# Aging Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6172

AN ACT REDUCING PARTICIPANT COSTS AND EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY  
**Title:** FOR THE CONNECTICUT HOME-CARE PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY.

**Vote Date:** 2/20/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 2/14/2019

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Aging Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

The language would expand eligibility for the state-funded portion of the Connecticut home-care program for the elderly and reduce the costs to participants. It would create an asset level of \$40,000 or if married, \$65,000. Also any person whose income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level and who is ineligible for Medicaid shall contribute 7% of the cost of his or her care. (A reduction from the current 9%.) Any person whose income exceeds 200% of the federal poverty level shall contribute 7% of the cost of his or her care in addition to the amount of applied income. (A reduction from the current 9%.)

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Connecticut Dept. of Social Services:** They offered written testimony in opposition to this proposal. The bill would increase the assets limits for the state-funded portion of the Connecticut Home Care Program for elders from \$35,766 for singles and \$47,688 for couples to \$40,000 for singles and \$65,000 for couples. It would also decrease the applied income contribution for recipients from 9% to 7%.

These changes would expand eligibility for CHCPE and it would result in an increase in eligible recipients for the program. As such the Dept. would need an increase in the CHCPE appropriation to serve the expanded case load and also an appropriation for the reduced contribution of such recipients. Since this program is completely state funded it would result in a significant fiscal impact.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Representative Kathleen McCarty, 38<sup>th</sup> Assembly District:** She offered testimony in support of this legislation indicating that it will expand eligibility for home-care services for persons who are at risk of inappropriate institutionalization in a nursing home.

She believes that the Connecticut Home-Care Program for the Elderly is a much needed and cost-effective program, saving the state approximately \$360 million annually. It improves the quality of life for our elderly population. Additionally she understands that more home care providers are finding it difficult to remain solvent in that Medicaid re-imbursement rate only covers about 67% of the actual costs of the long-term care services.

In order to protect the Connecticut Home-Care Program for the Elderly she recommends that some of the saving realized from Money Follows the Person and other Medicaid long-term services be reinvested into home and community care so as to ensure the availability and capacity of home-care services and providers.

**Connecticut Assisted Living Association:** Their testimony was in support of this bill. As mentioned in this bill adjustments to both asset limits and the required co-pay percentages make a big difference in the quality of life for those who require assisted living services in an affordable housing or assisted living demonstration project setting. They note that participation with the state's subsidized Assisted Living Demonstration Project sites and the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders ultimately save state tax dollars as well as prevent unnecessary, more costly, institutionalization of low-income seniors.

**Ms. Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut:** The state funded portion of the Connecticut Home-Care Program for the Elderly this is addressed in this proposal is invaluable to many as it helps older adults access needed services sooner and they commend the Committee for seeking a reduction in the current co-pay requirements which can be seen as a barrier to receiving care. They emphasize that a priority be placed on ensuring adequate funding for the elderly who are currently eligible and enrolled so that they may continue to receive the services that they need to remain in the community.

**Connecticut Area Agencies on Aging (C4A):** In order for them to support this bill they suggest the CT home Care Program line item would have to be increased in the resulting budget. Increasing eligibility without increasing funds available to the Program will result in reduced care plans and an increase in potential safety issues for vulnerable elders.

**AARP Connecticut:** They offered testimony that they are supportive of this bill. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders provides essential medical and non-medical support services to older residents in their homes. The state-funded portion of CHCPE has no limits of participant income but does place a cap on assets. Raising the asset limit and making this program more accessible to more individuals will help keep seniors in their homes and avoid placement in expensive nursing home environments.

**Ms. Jean Horn Caron, Executive Council Member, AARP Connecticut:** Ms. Caron offered testimony in strong support of this legislation and shared an her story about her mother and her experience with the Home Care Program for the Elderly. As her care giver she received a number of critical services and her mother was able to live at home during her last 5 years.

Connecticut seniors, and caregiving families, count on affordable home care services so older parents and spouses can stay at home. CT Home Care Program for Elders cost taxpayers approximately 30% less than the cost of a nursing home. She believes now is the time to invest in more aging in place services like the Connecticut Home Ccare Program for Elders.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

No testimony submitted

**Richard Ferrari, Assistant Clerk**  
**Gaia McDermott, Clerk**

**Date: 2/27/19**